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The Return of SHERLOCK HOLMES

By A. CONAN DOYLE,
Author of "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes,"
"The Hound of the Baskervilles," "The Sign of the Four," "A Study in Scarlet," Etc.



ILLUSTRATED BY F. D. STEELE

(Continued from Thirteenth page.)

band, and he—the noblest gentleman that ever lived, a man whose boots I was never worthy to lace—he broke his gallant heart and died. You remember that last night, when I came through that door, I begged and prayed you for mercy, and you laughed in my face as you are trying to laugh now, only your coward heart cannot keep your lips from twitching? Yes, you never thought to see me here again, but it was that night which taught me how I could meet you face to face and alone. Well, Charles Milverton, what have you to say?"

"Don't imagine that you can bully me," said he, rising to his feet. "I have only to raise my voice and I could call my servants and have you arrested. But I will make allowance for your natural anger. Leave the room at once as you came, and I will say no more."

The woman stood with her hand buried in her bosom and the same deadly smile on her thin lips.

"You will ruin no more lives as you have ruined mine. You will wring no more hearts as you wring mine. I will free the world of a poisonous thing. Take that, you hound—and that—and that—and that!"

She had drawn a little gleaming revolver and emptied barrel after barrel into Milverton's body, the muzzle within two feet of his shirt front. He shrank away and then fell forward upon the table, coughing furiously and clawing among the papers. Then he staggered to his feet, received another shot and rolled upon the floor. "You've done me!" he cried and lay still. The woman looked at him intently and ground her heel into his upturned face. She looked again, but there was no sound or movement. I heard a sharp rustle, the night air blew into the heated room and the avenger was gone.

No interference upon our part could have saved the man from his fate, but as the woman poured bullet after bullet into Milverton's shrinking body I was about to spring out when I felt Holmes' cold, strong grasp upon my wrist. I understood the whole argument of that firm, restraining grip—that it was no affair of ours; that justice had overtaken a villain; that we had our own duties and our own objects, which were not to be lost sight of. But hardly had the woman rushed from the room when Holmes with swift, silent steps was over at the other door. He turned the key in the lock. At the same instant we heard voices in the house and the sound of hurrying feet. The revolver shots had roused the household. With perfect coolness Holmes slipped across to the safe, filled his two arms with bundles of letters and poured them all into the fire. Again and again he did it, until the safe was empty.

Some one turned the handle and beat upon the outside of the door. Holmes looked swiftly round. The letter which had been the messenger of death for Milverton lay, all mottled with his blood, upon the table. Holmes tossed it in among the blazing papers. Then he drew the key from the outer door, passed through after me and locked it on the outside. "This way, Watson," said he, "we can scale the garden wall in this direction."

I could not have believed that an alarm could have spread so swiftly. Looking back, the huge house was one blaze of light. The front door was open, and figures were rushing down the drive. The whole garden was alive with people, and one fellow raised a view halloo as we emerged from the veranda and followed hard at our heels. Holmes seemed to know the grounds perfectly, and he threaded his way swiftly among a plantation of small trees, I close at his heels and our foremost pursuer panting behind us. It was a six foot wall which barred our path, but he sprang to the top and over. As I did the same I felt the hand of the man behind me grab at my ankle, but I kicked myself free and scrambled over a grassy screen coping. I fell upon my face among some bushes, but Holmes had me on my feet as an instant, and together we dashed away across the huge expanse of Hampstead heath. We had run two miles, I suppose, before Holmes at last halted and listened intently. All was absolute silence behind us. We had shaken off our pursuers and were safe.

We had breakfasted and were smoking our morning pipe on the day after the remarkable experience which I have recorded when Mr. Lestrade of Scotland Yard, very solemn and impressive, was ushered into our modest sitting room.

"Good morning, Mr. Holmes," said he; "good morning. May I ask if you are very busy just now?"

"Not too busy to listen to you."

"I thought that perhaps if you had nothing particular on hand you might care to assist us in a most remarkable case which occurred only last night at Hampstead."

"Dear me!" said Holmes. "What was that?"

"A murder—a most dramatic and remarkable murder. I know how keen you are upon these things, and I would take it as a great favor if you would step down to Appledore Towers and give us the benefit of your advice. It

is no ordinary crime. We have had our eyes upon this Mr. Milverton for some time, and, between ourselves, he was a bit of a villain. He is known to have held papers which he used for blackmailing purposes. These papers have all been burned by the murderers.

No article of value was taken, as it is probable that the criminals were men of good position whose sole object was to prevent social exposure.

"Criminals?" said Holmes. "Plural?"

"Yes, there were two of them. They were as nearly as possible captured red handed. We have their footmarks, we have their description. It's ten to one that we trace them. The first fellow was a bit too active, but the second was caught by the under gardener and only got away after a struggle. He was a middle sized, strongly built man—square jaw, thick neck, mustache, a mask over his eyes."

"That's rather vague," said Sherlock Holmes. "Why, it might be a description of Watson!"

"It's true," said the inspector, with amusement. "It might be a description of Watson."

"Well, I'm afraid I can't help you, Lestrade," said Holmes. "The fact is that I knew this fellow Milverton, that I considered him one of the most dangerous men in London and that I think there are certain crimes which the law cannot touch and which therefore to some extent justify private revenge. No, it's no use arguing. I will not handle this case."

Holmes had not said one word to me about the tragedy which we had witnessed, but I observed all the morning that he was in his most thoughtful mood, and he gave me the impression, from his vacant eyes and his abstracted manner, of a man who is striving to recall something to his memory. We were in the middle of our lunch when he suddenly sprang to his feet. "By Jove, Watson, I've got it!" he cried. "Take your hat! Come with me!" He hurried at his top speed down Baker street and along Oxford street until we had almost reached Regent circus. Here, on the left hand, there stands a shop window filled with photographs of the celebrities and beauties of the day. Holmes' eyes fixed themselves upon one of them, and following his gaze I saw the picture of a regal and stately lady in court dress, with a high diamond tiara upon her noble head. I looked at that delicately curved nose, at the marked eyebrows, at the straight mouth and the strong little chin beneath it. Then I caught my breath as I read the time honored title of the great nobleman and statesman whose wife she had been. My eyes met those of Holmes, and he put his finger to his lips as we turned away from the window.

REMOVAL NOTICE.
Dr. W. C. Dewberry and Dr. J. H. Bickelstaff, whose offices were burned out, have established offices in Nos. 11, 13 and 15 Masonic Temple. Phone 1212. nov.3-1mo.

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The natural beauty and abundance of this lady's hair is a striking illustration of what Herpicide will accomplish, and this is only one of the thousands of letters that the Herpicide Company have on file from people all over the world who are pleased to tell of the marvelous results obtained by the use of Herpicide.

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known throughout the world as "the original remedy that kills the dandruff germ." Herpicide is a new, scientific nonirritant germicide and prophylactic for the scalp—and positively cures dandruff, stops falling hair and prevents baldness. No one wants to lose their hair and it is a mighty serious matter to contemplate. Well, why trifle with unknown or so-called Hair-Growers, when you are absolutely guaranteed that Herpicide will not only save what hair you have, but will restore it to its natural luxuriance. It is the dandruff germ, which infests the scalp, that causes the hair to fall out. Herpicide will eradicate this microbic disease of the scalp and protect it against re-infection, and your hair will then grow as nature intended. NEWBRO'S HERPICIDE has reached the pinnacle of fame as a hair preparation and enjoys a distinction strictly its own. As a Hair Dressing—Herpicide is truly exquisite on account of its dainty and refreshing odor which is characteristic—it beautifies the hair and leaves it soft, glossy, light and fluffy—it contains no oil, grease or sedimentary substance neither does it stain nor dye the hair. Stops itching of the Scalp Almost Instantly.

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NEW OFFICE

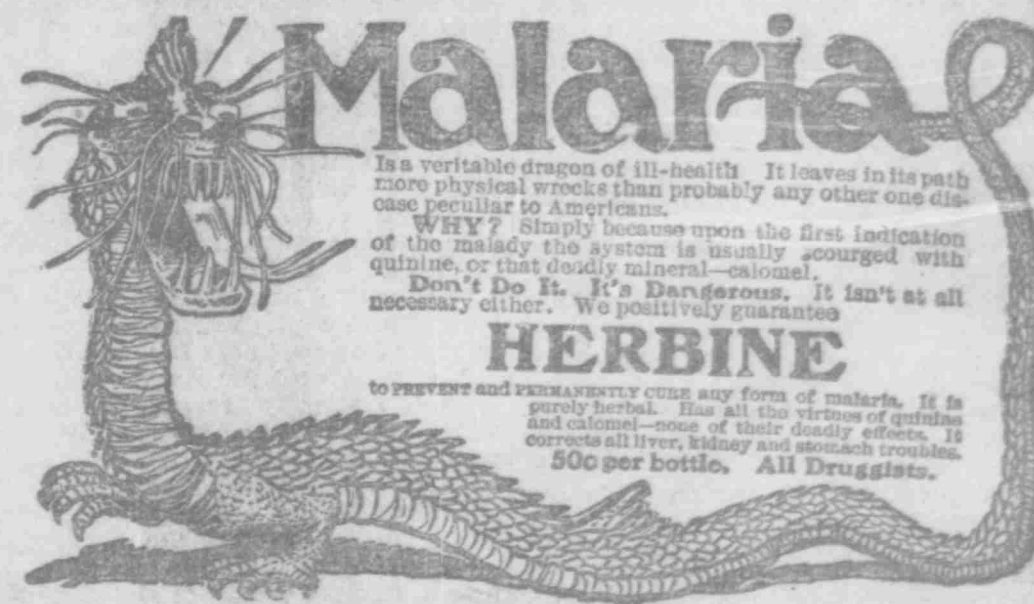
E. D. Beggs has moved his law office from his temporary quarters over Sol Cahn's to room No. 5 in the Fisher building.

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